



## **Texas Department of Insurance Division of Workers' Compensation**

### **Injured Employee Checklist**

Medical evidence shows that staying active and continuing to work while you are recovering from an injury or illness, or returning to work as soon as possible can help you heal faster. Use this checklist to open the lines of communication about your ability to return to work.

#### **Your doctor and you**

- ☐ Give your doctor all your workers' compensation information, including:
  - ☐ The name of your workers' compensation insurance carrier and claim number
  - ☐ Your TDI-DWC claim number
  - ☐ The adjuster's name and telephone number
  - ☐ Your employer's name, address, and the telephone number where you work.
- ☐ Go to all your medical appointments.
- ☐ Ask your doctor about how long it should take for you to recover from your injury.
- ☐ Tell your doctor about your job and provide a job description, if possible, to help your doctor understand the kind of work that you do.
- ☐ Ask your doctor if you can continue to work, even if you have some restrictions.
- ☐ Talk to your doctor to make sure you completely understand what you can and cannot do while you are recovering.
- ☐ Comply with your doctor's recommendations for resuming physical activity and your need for rest, both at home and at work.

#### **Your employer and you**

- ☐ Tell your employer who your doctor is, and how your employer can contact your doctor.
- ☐ Encourage your employer to talk to your doctor about the type of work you do, whether modified duties are available, and when you can return to work.
- ☐ Be sure to keep your employer informed and up to date on your recovery and your current abilities.
- ☐ Ask your employer about availability of work within your physical restrictions while you are recovering from your injury.
- ☐ Notify your employer immediately if your ability to work changes.
- ☐ Follow all company policies and requirements about workers' compensation injuries.

#### **The insurance carrier and you**

- ☐ Notify the workers' compensation insurance carrier if you change your address, phone number, or other contact information.
- ☐ Notify the workers' compensation insurance carrier if there is a change in your employment status or your earned income.

#### **Getting back to work**

- ☐ Be sure to let your employer and doctor know about any concerns or problems you might have related to your health and job assignments.



## Texas Department of Insurance Division of Workers' Compensation

### Return-to-Work Assistance Following Your Injury

The following resources may aid you in returning to work or finding appropriate work.

#### Texas Department of Insurance, Division of Workers' Compensation (TDI-DWC)

For assistance with your claim, contact your local TDI-DWC field office by calling 800-252-7031. For general information about workers' compensation in Texas, visit the injured employee resource page on the TDI-DWC website at <http://www.tdi.state.tx.us/wc/employee/index.html>.

#### Return-to-Work Reimbursement Program

Your employer may be eligible for reimbursement of funds to pay for a workplace modification that will allow you to stay at or return to work. Talk to your employer and adjuster about this TDI-DWC program. Visit [www.tdi.state.tx.us/wc/rtw](http://www.tdi.state.tx.us/wc/rtw) for more information.

#### Texas Workforce Commission (TWC)

The TWC has workforce centers throughout the state that offer a variety of services at no cost, to assist you in returning to work. Contact your local Texas Workforce Center or visit [www.workintexas.com](http://www.workintexas.com) for more information about these and other programs including: training, career & job search tools, child care to qualified families, and employment assistance.

#### Department of Assistive and Rehabilitative Services (DARS)

The DARS is dedicated to helping people who are having trouble keeping or finding a job because of a work-related injury and/or other disabilities. To meet with a DARS counselor to discuss your eligibility for this program, contact your local DARS office by calling 800-628-5115 (voice), 866-581-9328 (TTY) or in the Austin area at (512) 424-4060, or visit the DARS website at [www.dars.state.tx.us](http://www.dars.state.tx.us) for more information.

### Workplace Safety Tips

General safety tips to help you stay safe at work.

- Make sure your work area is clean and uncluttered.
- Use all safety equipment provided by your employer.
- Keep work areas well lit.
- Keep your tools in good working order.
- Ensure machine guards are in place.
- Be cautious when carrying objects, bending, lifting, twisting, etc.
- Keep one hand on handrails when climbing and descending stairs.
- Be aware of your surroundings and any dangers that might be there or that might develop.
- Use your seat belt when driving.
- Do not use cell phones while driving. Pull safely to the side of the road to make or answer calls.
- If your job involves travel, set a realistic goal for the number of miles that you can drive safely each day.
- If you are taking any medication that may affect your ability to perform any work-related tasks, notify your supervisor.
- In hot weather stay hydrated; in cold weather dress in layers to stay warm.
- Use appropriate shelter during inclement weather.
- Inform your supervisor of any unsafe conditions or procedures.

### Other Safety Resources

You can report hazardous working conditions to the TDI-DWC Safety Violations Hotline by calling toll-free 800-452-9595. Calls are taken in English and Spanish. If you wish to remain anonymous, you may do so.

To learn more about safe work practices, you can download free safety training materials from the TDI-DWC website at <http://www.tdi.state.tx.us/wc/safety> or check out free safety training DVDs and videos from our library. Your employer may also improve safety in the workplace with these and other TDI-DWC resources such as: free help understanding Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) safety laws; safety training classes; and guidance on drug-free workplace programs. You or your employer can call TDI-DWC at 800-687-7080 for more information about safety training materials or to request copies of safety publications.



## **Texas Department of Insurance Division of Workers' Compensation**

### **Return-to-Work Information for Employers**

Returning an injured employee to work or keeping the employee at work while he or she recovers is important for the employee and his or her family; but it also impacts the employer by reducing workers' compensation costs, and reducing costly turnover through retention of experienced employees.

Here are some steps employers can take to help injured employees successfully return to the workplace and eliminate unnecessary lost time:

1. As soon as possible after an injury, give the employee's treating doctor a description of the employee's regular job duties, and descriptions of any other jobs that may be available for the employee during his or her recovery.
2. Stay in contact with the injured employee's treating doctor during the course of treatment to discuss return-to-work alternatives and opportunities, and to exchange information about the employee's ability to work as his or her recovery progresses.
3. When the injured employee returns to work, be sure to assign duties in accordance with the doctor's instructions. If the employee cannot perform all the functions of his or her pre-injury job, consider temporarily modifying or adjusting the employee's job duties or work schedule. Determine whether work-sharing options can be implemented among the injured employee and other employees, so the injured employee can perform functions that are productive and beneficial to the business.
4. Talk to the insurance carrier's claims adjuster regularly about the injured employee's progress and return-to-work status. Ask the adjuster about any return-to-work coordination services the insurance carrier can provide. When it is medically appropriate, work with the adjuster to make a bona fide offer of employment. If there are questions or disagreement about the injured employee's medical treatment or ability to return to work, the adjuster may assign a case manager, request a designated doctor examination, or request approval for a required medical examination (RME).

The Texas Department of Insurance, Division of Workers' Compensation (TDI-DWC) provides free information and instructional booklets, seminars, consultations, and training on return-to-work related topics for employers. For more information about return-to-work, visit our website at <http://www.tdi.state.tx.us/wc/rtw/>, or call 512-804-5000.

#### **TDI-DWC Return-to-Work Employer Reimbursement Program**

Certain employers may be eligible for reimbursement of up to \$5,000 for the costs of workplace modifications necessary to allow an injured employee to stay on the job or return to work. For an application go to <http://www.tdi.state.tx.us/wc/rtw/index.html>, or call 512-804-5000.

**Working WORKS.**

**Make Return to Work - Work for you and your employees.**



**Texas Department of Insurance  
Division of Workers' Compensation**

**Workplace Safety Information for Employers  
Conducting Accident Investigations**

When an incident occurs in your workplace in which an employee is injured, or almost injured, employers should conduct an accident investigation to safeguard employees and prevent future incidents. First, it is important to secure the accident area immediately following an incident, and then to clear the area of hazards prior to initiating the investigation.

**Key facts to look for when conducting an investigation:**

- The type of injury and the body parts affected.
  - The source of the injury - the object, substance, exposure, or bodily motion that directly produced or inflicted the injury.
  - The accident type - the event that directly resulted in the injury.
  - The hazardous physical condition or circumstance that allowed the incident to occur.
  - The source of the incident - the object, substance or part of the premises in which the hazardous condition existed.
  - The hazardous object - the specific object/activity that was hazardous.
  - Unsafe acts - any violation of an accepted safe procedure that directly resulted in the incident.
- Remember to investigate contributing factors and search out the underlying cause.

**Employers should use the following steps to perform the investigation:**

1. Review descriptions of the incident and accounts of the events preceding the incident. (A good source of information for analysis is the supervisor's accident report.)
2. Review normal operating procedures.
3. Interview each injured employee and witness privately and separately.
4. Analyze the data collected to determine why the incident occurred, the most likely sequence of events, and most probable direct and indirect causes.
5. Prepare a summary report, including corrective actions to prevent a recurrence, such as:
  - a. equipment/workplace controls (i.e., proper guards on machinery, improved lighting, sound enclosures, or newer, safer tools);
  - b. personnel controls (i.e., mandatory breaks during temperature or weather extremes, employee rotations in areas with exposure limitations, schedule modifications, policy and/or procedure changes, training, operating instructions, etc.); or
  - c. personal protective equipment (PPE) needed to reduce the effects that a hazard has on an employee (i.e., safety glasses, gloves, hard hats, etc.).
6. Follow up frequently to ensure that corrective measures have been put in place and that they are effective.

The Texas Department of Insurance, Division of Workers' Compensation (TDI-DWC) has various resources to help you prevent workplace injuries and illnesses, including: free safety and health consultations on Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) regulations; regional and onsite safety training; free safety and health publications; free safety training DVD and video loans; guidance on drug-free workplace programs; and the Safety Violations Hotline. For more information on these services, visit the TDI website at <http://www.tdi.state.tx.us/wc/safety>, or call 800-687-7080.